

Amendments to the Specification:

Please delete the heading and paragraph at page 1, lines 6-9.

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

~~This application claims priority from US Patent Application No. 10/256,949, "SYSTEM FOR AWARDING A BONUS TO A GAMING DEVICE ON A WIDE AREA NETWORK", filed September 27, 2001.~~

At page 2, after line 9, please include the following title:

Summary

Please replace the paragraph at page 2, lines 24-31, with the following amended paragraph:

The preferred embodiment is called the ~~Random Rewards~~ RANDOM REWARDS[®] promotion. The promotion is complete when the amount of play on participating EGMs reaches the randomly selected number between the minimum and maximum numbers, which are specified at the master server. The randomly selected number is called the lucky number. Preferably a player must be issued a player-tracking card to be eligible to participate. Although the invention is not so limited, a typical implementation is for a plurality of casinos that are commonly owned with each recognizing a player-tracking card issued by any of the others. As a result, player activity is tracked – in a known manner – across all of the casinos.

Please replace the paragraphs at page 3, lines 13-33 to with the following amended paragraphs:

Turning now to Fig.1, indicated generally at 10 is a system constructed in accordance with the present invention. It includes a wide-area network (WAN) 12 that incorporates a single master server 14. Also included in the WAN is a configuration workstation 15, including a keyboard, monitor, and software, that permits a user of the workstation to configure the master server. Portions of WAN 12 are located at different casinos, one of which is depicted generally 16. Each casino includes a local area network (LAN), like LAN 18a 18A at casino 16. LAN ~~18a~~ 18A includes a router 20; a concentrator 24; a slave server 26, which – among other things – tracks carded EGM play in a known manner; a player server 27, which provides messages to displays associated with the EGMs; a key distribution center 29 (KDC), which implements security as will be described; and a plurality of EGMs, only two of which are exemplary slot machines 28, 30. In addition, a bank controller 31 facilitates communication between slot

machines 28, 30 and concentrator 24. Bank controller 31 provides the same function for an animation computer 33, which generates animated content that appears on a display 35.

The same components (except for a master server, like master server 14) appear in LANs ~~18a, 18b, 18c, 18d, 18e~~ 18B, 18C, 18D, 18E (not shown) at each of the other casinos (also not shown) on the WAN. It should be appreciated that the master server may also be located at a site remote from any of the participating casinos, or – as in the present embodiment – at one of the casinos; specifically, master server 14 is located at casino 16. Although specified network structure is depicted, the invention can be implemented on any suitable network, regardless of its design or the hardware with which it is implemented.

Please replace the paragraphs at page 4, lines 19-31, with the following amended paragraphs:

In the multi-casino ~~Random Rewards~~ RANDOM REWARDS® promotion, selecting minimum and maximum numbers at master server 14 specifies the range from which the winning number is selected. The range corresponds to a level of play by the participating EGMs; the total current pool results from all plays made on all EGMs participating in the multi-casino promotion. Master server 14 is also configured with a list of all slave servers participating in the promotion. The current pool represents the combined contributions of each slave server. Each slave server pool total further represents the combined contribution of all EGMs participating in the promotion at the associated slave server's casino.

Each ~~slaver~~ slave server is also configured, primarily by designating with EGMs are linked to a particular bonus pool. The slaver servers are also configured using their associated workstation, like server 26 is configured by workstation 15. Each local configuration workstation can be used to configure the master server and the associated local server, but a workstation at one location cannot be used to configure a slave server at another location.

Please replace the paragraph at page 5, lines 18-25, with the following amended paragraph:

Other meters, such as the coin-in-meter, the game meter, the win meter, or another created meter can also be used. Each slave server is updated every half – second with data identifying each EGM whose coin-in metes advanced in the preceding half second and the amount of advance by each. From this the slave server calculates the total coin in for the period and multiplies this ~~times~~ by the contribution rate to produce a number equal to the total accrued

contribution by that slave server, and therefore its associated casino, since the current pool began accruing. This local pool value is the number transmitted over the WAN in step 40 to the master server.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 6, line 3 to page 7, line 14, with the following amended paragraphs:

Once the lucky number is reached, the master server determines a winning slave server in step 46. The winning slave server is chosen randomly among slave servers generating local pool increases responsive to the heartbreak that caused the current pool to exceed the lucky number. The random selection, however, is weighted proportionate to the local pool contribution reported by each casino when a winning slave server is chosen. In other words, casinos that generate larger wagers or more play advance the luck number count more, and are therefore more likely to reach the luck number.

Once the master server has randomly selected a winning slave server, the master server sends point-to-point messages to each slave server identifying the winning slave server. The winning slave server then identifies a winning EGM – in step 48 – also based on a weighted random process. It selects the next half-second of updated play data (described above) to randomly choose a winning EGM from those that had a coin-in event in the selected play data. The random selection is, however, weighted to give a proportionately greater chance of winning to EGMs as a function of the amount of the wager. In other words, the bigger the wager, the more likely it is that an EGM will be selected. The winning EGM pays the bonus, in response to a command from the slave server, and updates its history record. The selected EGM may, but need not, be locked to prevent further play. The EGM may be locked in different ways, depending upon system configuration. First, the user may check a box in a panel appearing on the display of workstation 15 that requires each EGM to lock up whenever the EGM is a ~~Random Rewards~~ RANDOM REWARDS[®] winner. Second, if the box is not checked, an award may or may not be locked up. The EGM manufacturer configures the EGM for a maximum jackpot payable on the EGM credit meter. If the ~~Random Rewards~~ RANDOM REWARDS[®] payment is below that maximum, the payment is paid to the credit meter, from which it can be wagered or cashed out. If the payment is greater than the maximum, the machine is locked up.

In another aspect of the invention, one or more slave servers can be configured to award another bonus, preferably the ~~Celebration Prizes~~ CELEBRATION PRIZES[®] promotion, when a ~~Random Rewards~~ RANDOM REWARDS[®] winner is selected. In the ~~Celebration Prizes~~ CELEBRATION PRIZES[®] promotion, the slave server can be designated to award preselected EGMs a bonus when a ~~Random Rewards~~ RANDOM REWARDS[®] winner is selected. Only

EGMs that are linked to the bonus pool that includes the winner are eligible for the ~~Celebration Prizes~~ CELEBRATION PRIZES[®] payment. Each slave server can be set to provide the ~~Celebration Prizes~~ CELEBRATION PRIZES[®] promotion, or not, and each property that provides it can set criteria establishing which of the eligible EGMs are awarded a ~~Celebration Prizes~~ CELEBRATION PRIZES[®] bonus. For example, of the eligible EMGs, ~~Celebration Prizes~~ CELEBRATION PRIZES[®] winners might be only those with a player's card in, or those whose last bet was a maximum bet, or those who registered a coin drop within a predetermined period of time, or some combination of these or other criteria.

Following payment to the selected EGM, the bonus promotion is continuously repeated. One or more of the bonus pools can be modified by either ending it or making changes to its parameters, such as the contribution rate and the minimum and maximum numbers that define the range from which the lucky number is randomly selected. Commands to modify a pool are entered at workstation 15. The modifications are effective immediately, modifying the current pool. In an alternative embodiment, the modifications are not implemented until after a ~~Random Rewards~~ RANDOM REWARDS[®] winner is selected for the current game associated with the pool to be modified. The commands set a flag, which implements a process after the current game. As a result, the modifications are made commencing with the next game associated with the modified pool.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 27 to page 8, line 2, with the following amended paragraph:

The master server and the slave servers each maintain a delayed pool, which is not displayed to bonus promotion participants and does not contribute to the growth of the current pool during the current promotion. The slave delayed pool is comprised of play on eligible EGMs that were not able to contribute to the bonus. For example, if communication between an EGM and a slave server ~~were~~ was lost for a period of time, restoration of communication could cause an immediate large incremental contribution from the EGM resulting from sudden realization of accrued off-line contributions. The restored EGM therefore has a disproportionate opportunity to win the bonus because of the weighting of play involved in the selection of the winning EGM.

Please replace the paragraph at page 9, lines 16-25, with the following amended paragraph:

Consideration will first be give to the setup key, which is a single identical key shared by each of the participating nodes, namely, each slave server, like slave server 27; master server 14; and each of the communication boards in the slot machines, like slot machines 28, 30 that may be selected to participate in the ~~Random-Rewards~~ RANDOM REWARDS[®] bonus. The setup key can be installed by installing it in firmware associated with each node. This installation may be accomplished in several ways, including simply including it during the manufacturing or installation process in firmware memory. Preferably, one half of the setup key is encoded on each of two separate magnetic-strip cards. The setup key is then installed by requiring two individuals to swipe each card at each of the nodes, thereby downloading the setup key at each node. This procedure enhances security of the setup keys.

Please replace the paragraph at page 11, lines 21-27, with the following amended paragraph:

Finally, consideration will be given to payment of other bonuses, such as promotional awards, in addition to the ~~Random-Rewards~~ RANDOM REWARDS[®] promotion described above. The present invention can implement direct payment of these rewards across multiple properties at the slot machine including, e.g., direct transfers of redeemable credits to the slot machine; direct transfers of non-redeemable credits to the slot machine (~~Xtra-Credit~~ XTRA CREDIT[®]), as described in U.S. Patent Application No. 09/134,598, filed August 14, 1998, which is hereby incorporated by reference for all purposes; and temporary change of the machine award schedule.

Please replace the paragraph at page 13, lines 3-11, with the following amended paragraph:

A portion of the gaming network of Figure 1 is shown in Figure 3. The portion shown is that in casino 16 and is part of LAN ~~18a~~ 18A. There is no limitation to a single property intended in the selection of this portion. The techniques and approaches discussed below may happen between a transmitting node and a receiving node at any level of the system. This includes between a master server and a slave server, either co-located at a property or with the master server located at a different site from the slave server. It also includes between a slave server and an electronic gaming machine. In addition, the electronic gaming machines 28

and 30 will more than likely be the receiving entities for most commands that are user-related, such as awarding bonuses.

Please replace the paragraph at page 15, lines 10-16, with the following amended paragraph:

A general process for use of digital signatures in a gaming network is shown in Figure 4. At 50, play begins. This will launch the bonus monitoring operation on the servers as discussed above, as well as the interaction between the player and the EGM. At 52, a triggering event occurs, such as the awarding of a bonus, a winning, etc., ~~at 52~~. When the triggering event occurs, the server, such as the master server or the slave server, generates the resulting command at 54. An example would be the triggering event being a payment of a bonus, and the command would be to pay out the bonus.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 15, line 24 to page 16, line 2, with the following amended paragraphs:

At the EGM, the command is received at 60. The message is then hashed again, the digest and signature processes completed and the message verified. If the signature does not verify at ~~60~~ 61, the command is rejected at 62. This may trigger some additional safeguards, such as notification of a hijacked message to a system administrator, an alarm being set off, among other security notifications.

If the signature is verified at ~~60~~ 61, the EGM will comply with the command contained within the digitally signed message at 64. If, for example, the command is to pay an award of \$500, the award is allocated to the player, in points or money. These processes from the reception of the command to the actual execution are performed at the receiving node, such as the slave server or the EGM. The receiving node may also be referred to as a 'subservient device' in that slave servers are subservient to master servers and EGMs are subservient to both slave servers and master servers.